

A new species of *Syzygium* Gaertn. (Myrtaceae) from Southern Western Ghats, India.

N. Sasidharan and Jomy Augustine¹

Kerala Forest Research Institute, Peechi 680653, Kerala

Abstract

A new species of *Syzygium* Gaertn. is described from Southern Western Ghats.

INTRODUCTION

During our study on the flora of Periyar Tiger Reserve, Idukki district, Kerala, 18 taxa of Myrtaceae were collected. Following the studies of Schmid (1972), 14 of them belonged to *Syzygium* Gaertn. and the rest to *Eugenia* L. One of the *Syzygium* collections was found not agreeing with any of the known species from India. The specimens were further compared with the collections from the Indo-Malesian region at Kew Herbarium and was found not matching. It is described and illustrated here as a new species as *S. periyarensis*, named after the type locality, The Periyar Tiger Reserve.

***Syzygium periyarensis* Jomy & Sasidharan sp. nov.**

Syzygio firmo Thw. affinis in foliis obovatis ad late ellipticis coreaceis basi acuto vel obtuso cymis terminalibus corymbosis, sed laminae marginibus planis venis lateralibus tenuibus nervis intramarginalibus inconspicuis floribus maioribus differt.

Typus : India, Kerala state, Idukki district, Periyar Tiger Reserve, Sunderamala, ± 1300m, *Jomy Augustine* 13570, March 14, 1994 (Holo MH, Iso KFRI, CALI)

Evergreen trees, to 15 m high, bark smooth; branchlets terete, *ca* 4 mm thick. Leaves opposite, lamina 11-15 x 7-9 cm, obovate or broadly elliptic, obtusely acute, acumen *ca* 0.5 cm long, base acute or obtuse, coriaceous, margins flat; lateral nerves 7-14 pairs, inconspicuous above and prominulous below, irregular, faint towards the margins, intramarginal veins absent or visible only towards the distal half, faint, 3-4 mm from the margin, intercostae indistinct, sparingly black punctate below; petiole 7-15 mm long, stout, dark brown. Cymes corymbose, 5-8 cm across, terminal, few-flowered; pedicel 4.5 mm long; pseudo-pedicel 3 mm long; calyx tube 12 x 12 mm, tube above the ovary 3-4 mm high, lobes 4, *ca* 6 x 12 mm, broadly ovate, obtuse; petals 4, white, *ca* 13 mm across, orbicular, concave; stamens numerous, many seriate, filaments 11-18

¹ Department of Botany, St. Thomas College, Pala, Kottayam, Kerala

N. Sasidharan and Jomy Augustine



Fig. 1 A. flowering twig, B. flower, C. L.S. of flower, D. Calyx, E. petal, F₁ & F₂ anthers

Syzygium periyarensis

mm long, inflexed in bud; anthers 1.5 mm long, ovate, obtuse; disk prominent, 2-3 mm, thick, shortly crenate; ovary conical, cells 2.5 x 2 mm; ovules many, placentation axile, style *ca* 22 mm long; stigma indistinct.

Syzygium periyarensis is allied to *S. firmum* Thw. by the obovate to broadly elliptic coriaceous leaves with acute or obtuse base and terminal corymbose cymes. But can be distinguished by the flat leaf margins, faint intramarginal nerves and larger flowers against the revolute leaf margins, two tier prominent intra-marginal nerves which are more or less looped and smaller flowers of *S. firmum* Thw. (Table 1).

Table 1. Comparison of *Syzygium periyarensis* with *Syzygium firmum*

| No. | Characters | <i>S. periyarensis</i> | <i>S. firmum</i> |
|-----|--------------------|--|--|
| 1. | Leaf margin | flat | prominently revolute |
| 2. | Lateral nerves | 7-14 pairs inconspicuous above, faint towards the margin | many, equally prominent on both sides, reticulate |
| 3. | Intramarginal vein | absent or visible only towards the distal half, 3-4 mm inside the margin | distinct, 2-tiered, prominent, looped 3-6 mm inside the margin |
| 4. | Petiole | 7-15 mm long | 12-25 mm long |
| 5. | Cymes | terminal | terminal or axillary |
| 6. | Pedicel | 4 mm long | flowers subsessile |
| 7. | Calyx tube | 12 x 12 mm | 10 x 7 mm |
| 8. | Petals | 13 x 13 mm | 6 x 5 mm |
| 9. | Stamens | 11-18 mm long | 20-22 mm long |

Flowering : March - April

Habitat : Occasional along the banks of streams in association with *Syzygium hemisphericum* (Wight) Alston, *Gordonia obtusa* Wall. ex Wight & Arn., *Ternstroemia japonica* Thunb., etc.

N. Sasidharan and Jomy Augustine

Acknowledgements

We are grateful to the Wildlife Wing of Kerala Forest Department for financial assistance for the study. Sincere thanks are due to Dr. J.F. Veldkamp, Rijksherbarium, Leiden for providing the Latin diagnosis. The first author is thankful to Ms. E. Nic Laughadha, Kew Herbarium for the help rendered in referring the relevant *Syzygium* specimens.

Literature cited

Schmid, R. 1972. *A Resolution of the Eugenia-Syzgium Controversy (Myrtaceae)*. American Journ. Botany 59 : 423-436.